

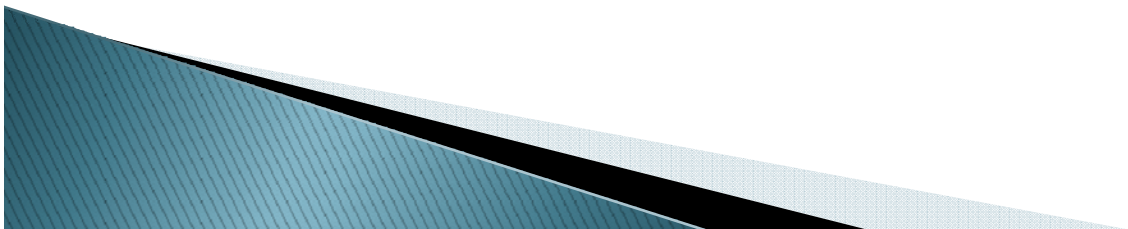


THE HOLY BOOK OF ACTS

CHAPTER 24

H.G. Bishop Youssef

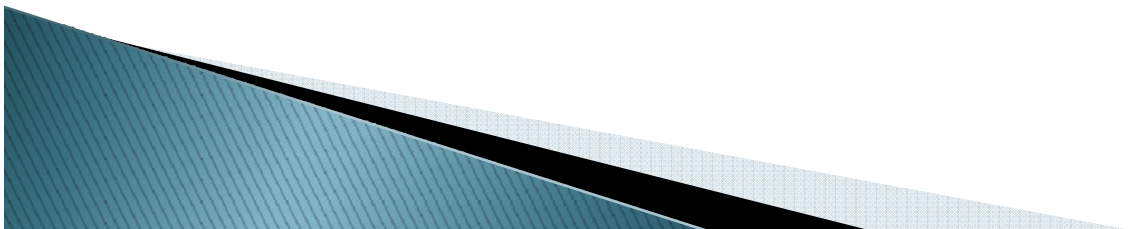
Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern US



Introduction

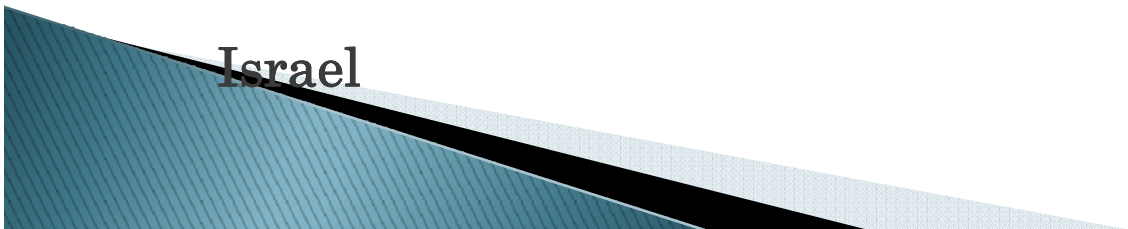
Chapter Outline:

- Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)
- The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)
- Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)



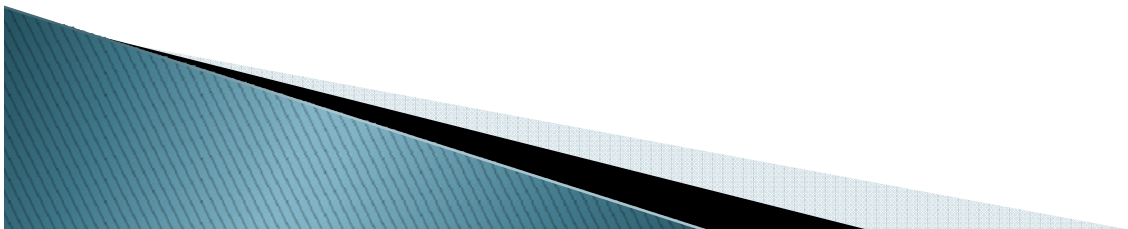
Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)

- The Chief Priest, Elders, and Tertullus arrived in Caesarea
- The deep hostility of the Jews is shown by the fact that the high priest himself came down to prosecute St. Paul and attend the trial
- Given the "great dissension" (Acts 23:10) that arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees over St. Paul, most if not all of "the elders" (Acts 24:1) who accompanied probably were from the Sadducees faction of the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of Israel



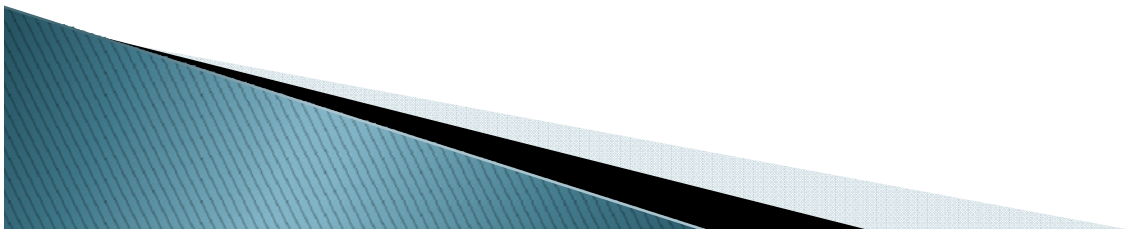
Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)

- They made accusations and to provided evidence against St. Paul
- Tertullus, a lawyer, had been deemed best able to present Ananias and company's case against St. Paul
- Some have supposed that Tertullus was not a Jew, from his name, but it is probable that he was a Jew who had been educated in Roman law, perhaps at Rome



Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)

- Tertullus was an eloquent spokesman
- He began by giving Felix great praise
- Did the Jews in Judea "enjoy great peace and prosperity?"
- If so, 470 Roman soldiers wouldn't have been needed to protect the transfer of one prisoner
- The nation was in great upheaval during his rule
- St. Paul's companions wouldn't have had to bring famine relief donations for the church in Jerusalem



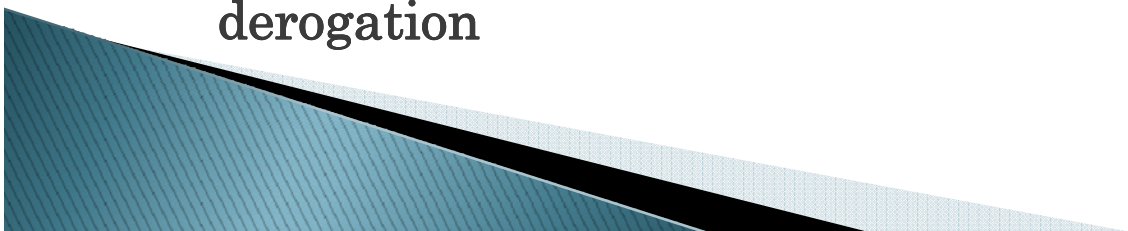
Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)

- They did not “accept it with thankfulness” St. Paul had been sent to Caesarea because the Jews had plotted to kill him in Jerusalem, which would have required them to fight against and probably kill the Roman soldiers protecting St. Paul
- Felix was not noble
- He was originally a slave from Cilicia but had gained his freedom thanks to his brother, Marcus Antonius Pallas
- As Felix' political fortunes rose, so did his reputation for corruption, cruelty and base lusts



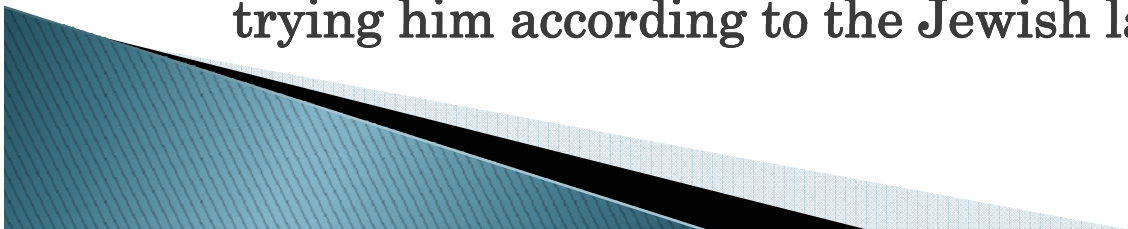
Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)

- The charges were then levied against St. Paul
- The main concern of Roman law was "keeping the peace"
- By accusing St. Paul of being a riot-starter, was a serious concern
- This caused much trouble and disturbance to the Jews
- He also accuses St. Paul of heresy which is against the Jewish law by being a ringleader of a sect of Nazarenes
- The Jews called Christian "the sect of the Nazarenes" in derogation



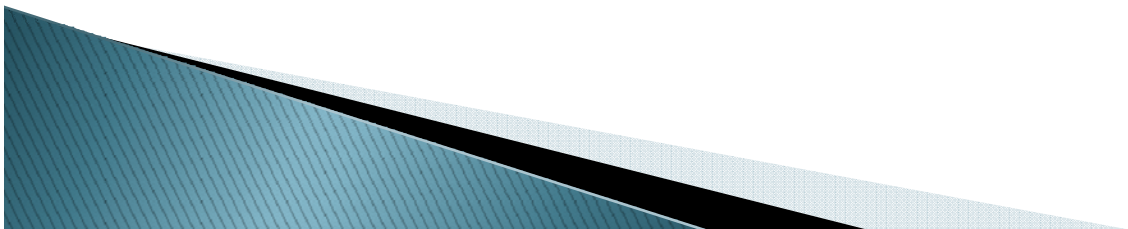
Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)

- The reason why this urged was to show that St. Paul preached a religion not authorized by Roman law
- Did St. Paul try to "profane the temple"?
- To the contrary, he spent almost seven days in it in ritual purification
- The penalty of the last accusation by Jewish law was death, and the Romans usually permitted it to be enforced
- If we look back at the facts, we find that the Jews were not trying him according to the Jewish law



Accusations Were Made (24:1-9)

- The captain had been the one that had sent St. Paul to Felix to be tried
- What Tertullus was shooting for was to have Felix send St. Paul back to Jerusalem where they could try him outside of the Roman jurisdiction
- The attending Jews agreed with Tertullus' accusations



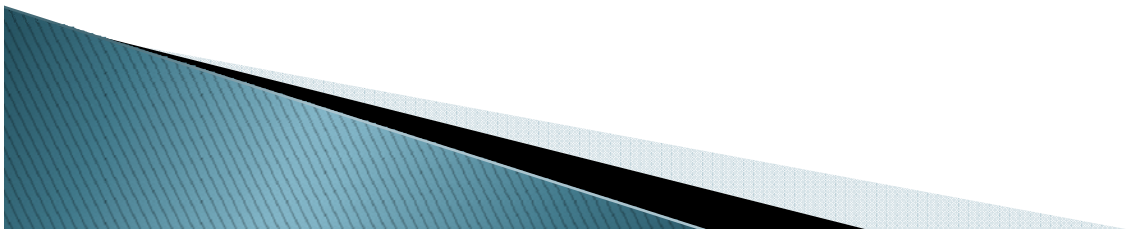
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- St. Paul was then given opportunity to provide his defense before Felix
- St. Paul indicated that he was happy to speak for himself
- He recognized Felix to have been a judge of the nation for many years
- St. Paul uses no flattery; he simply expresses his satisfaction at having to plead before one whose long official experience of Jewish matters would enable him the better to understand and appreciate what he had to say



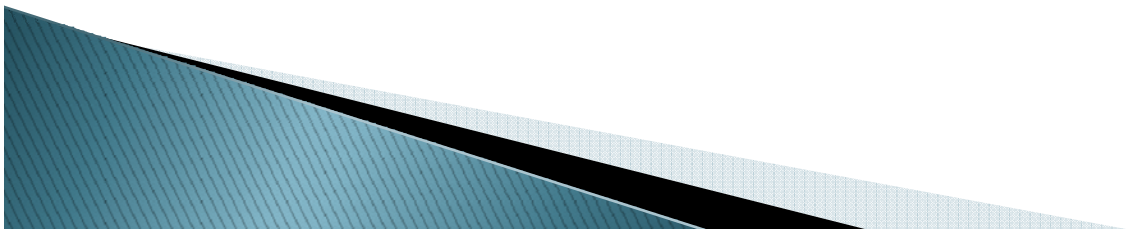
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- St. Paul reviewed the events as his defense to the Jewish accusations
- He had gone up to Jerusalem to worship about twelve days prior
- That is hardly enough time to organize a riot especially since 3 of those 12 days were spent in Roman custody
- St. Paul's reason for coming to Jerusalem was to worship the Lord, not to cause trouble



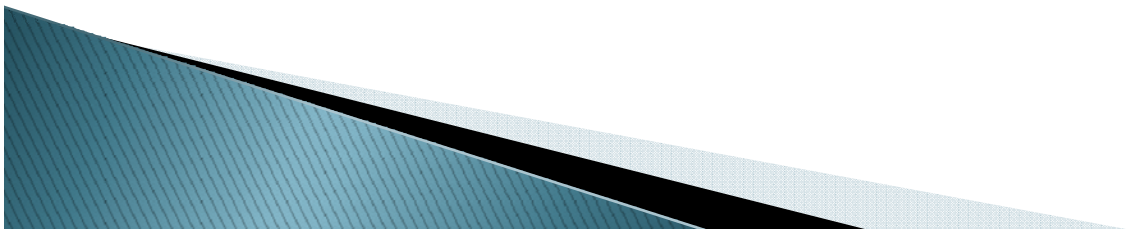
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- They did not find St. Paul disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogue or in the city
- This is in answer to the first charge
- St. Paul focuses on lack of evidence



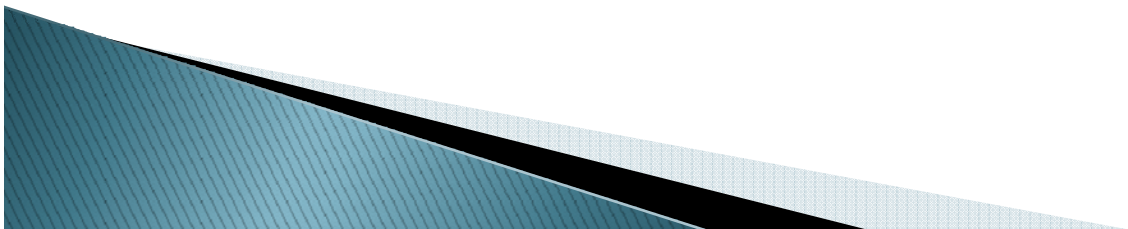
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- St. Paul stated that they could not prove these accusations
- Ac 24:14-16 are in answer to the second charge, that he is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes (Ac 24:5)
- He confesses that he worships God after that Way they call a sect
- Felix was aware of Christianity, which was called "The Way" at that time



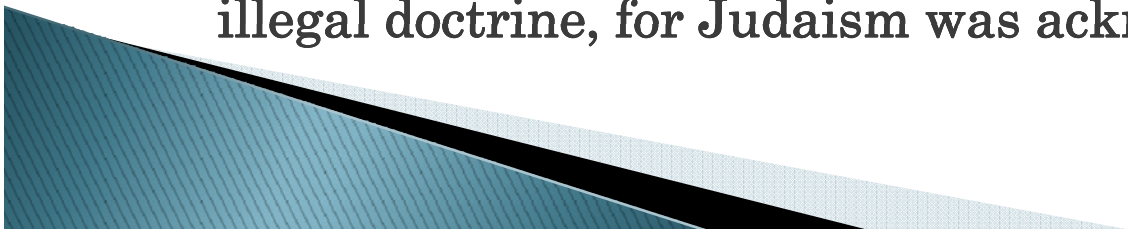
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- He references the Scripture, indicating that his Christian beliefs are in line with "all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14)
- The Roman law allows every nation to worship its own deities
- St. Paul claims protection under that law, worshipping the God of his ancestors, even as they, only of a different sect of the common religion



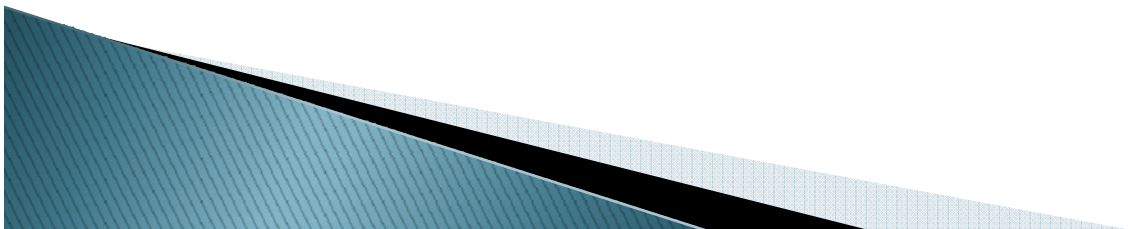
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- He also declares that his hope rests in God which was the same hope that each of them had expressed in the resurrection of the dead
- This hope of the resurrection, the great doctrine of Christianity, was one that the law and the prophets foreshadow, and which they themselves also allow
- The Jews held this same hope
- In this matter, he was not preaching a new, unknown and illegal doctrine, for Judaism was acknowledged by Roman law



The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- In this belief of a resurrection
- His belief was not a theory, but a life,
- St. Paul is summarizing how Christians are to live our lives
- To be diligent in the confession of our sins, our prayer life, our worship and our study of God's word
- In Ephesians, St. Paul teaches the constant act of "putting off the old man, putting on the new



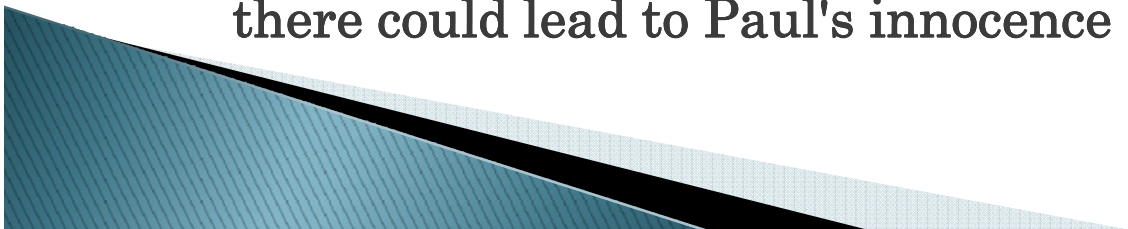
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- Here St. Paul begins his reply to the third charge, that of profaning the temple
- He came to Jerusalem after many years with the most benevolent motives
- To bring and deliver alms and offerings to his nation
- These were sums of money gathered in the Gentile churches for the poor in Jerusalem
- He states how these Jews from Asia who raised the outcry found him engaged. He was engaged in a Jewish rite



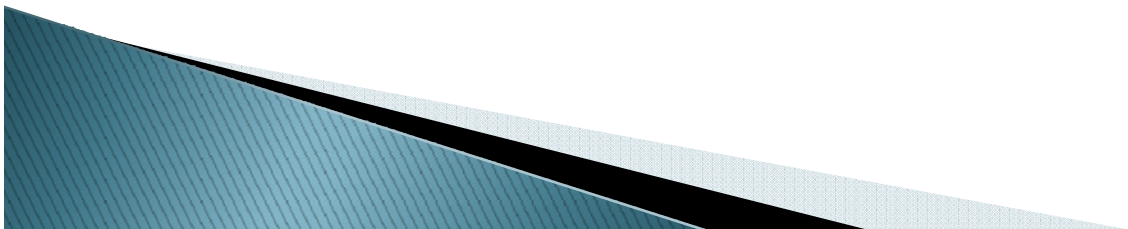
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- St. Paul states that he can get witness to collaborate his story
- These foreign Jews were the legal accusers
- If they had an accusation against St. Paul, they should have come before Felix at this time
- The Roman custom required the accusers to face the accused
- St. Paul asked those Jews present if there had been found any wrongdoing in him while before the Sanhedrin council
- The fact that the people who actually started the riot where not there could lead to Paul's innocence



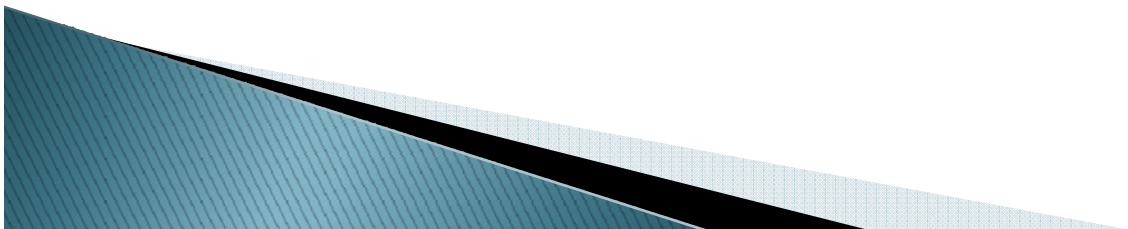
The Defense Before Felix (24:10-21)

- The only statement that St. Paul thought they may have objected to was what he had cried out among them,
"Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day
- The Pharisee's believed in the resurrection
- The Saducee's did not believe in a resurrection
- St. Paul is adding to his credibility by being total honest about his riot-starting sentence in the Sanhedrin



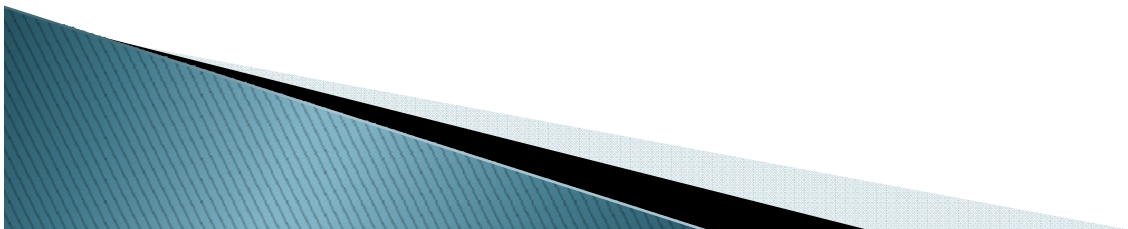
Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)

- Why wouldn't Felix want to render a verdict?
- Understanding the real animus of the charges
- Felix was well acquainted with the Jewish hatred of Christians
- He knew that St. Paul wasn't guilty
- He knew that Christians didn't go around starting riots
- This was a positive witness of the local Christian community despite the oppression of the Roman Government



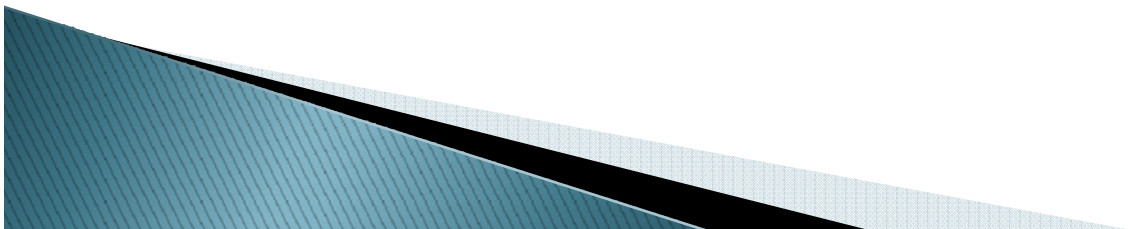
Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)

- He wanted a bribe from St. Paul in order to let him go
- Felix knew that the Sanhedrin controlled the power in Judea, so therefore he didn't want to anger them by releasing St. Paul
- He delayed on the decision so as to not get in trouble
- He stated that he would make a decision on the case when
- Lysias the commander came to Caesarea



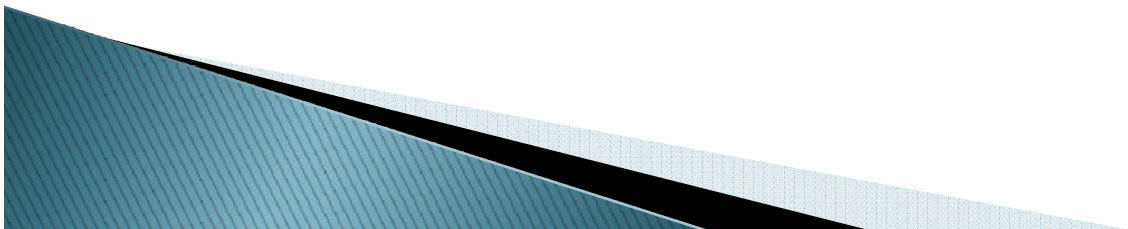
Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)

- St. Paul was held by the centurion
- St. Paul was not put in confinement, but under the charge of an officer who was responsible for him
- Usually in this kind of imprisonment the prisoner was bound to a soldier
- His friends were allowed to visit him and provide for him
- Felix hoped that St. Paul's friends would give him money to release him



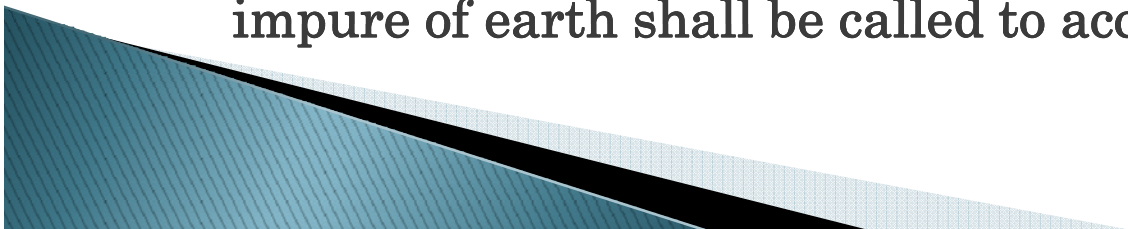
Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)

- Later, Felix and his wife, Drusilla, called for St. Paul
- Drusilla was Jewish
- She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa the elder who died miserably at Caesarea (Ac 12:23)
- They heard St. Paul "concerning faith in Christ
- They were both curious about Christianity
- Felix made himself available to St. Paul so Paul could offer him a bribe



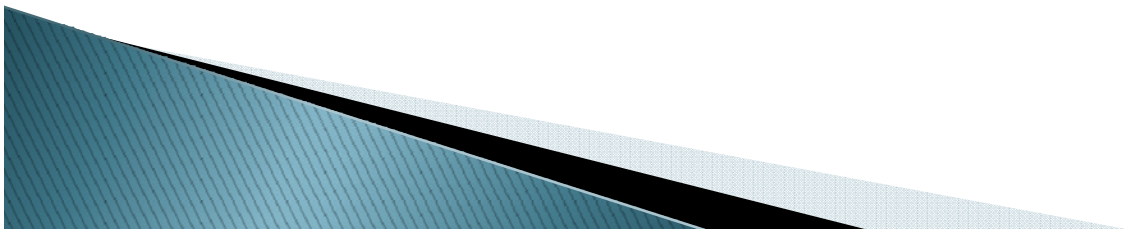
Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)

- St. Paul didn't discuss his wrongful imprisonment, local politics or even what he truly thought of Felix
- He focused on the Gospel
- Righteousness: he spoke of justice to a judge who held this office only for the sake of gain and who took bribes
- Self-control: he rebuked the unbridled sway of the passions and of lust
- Judgment: he pictured the judgment scene when the unjust and impure of earth shall be called to account



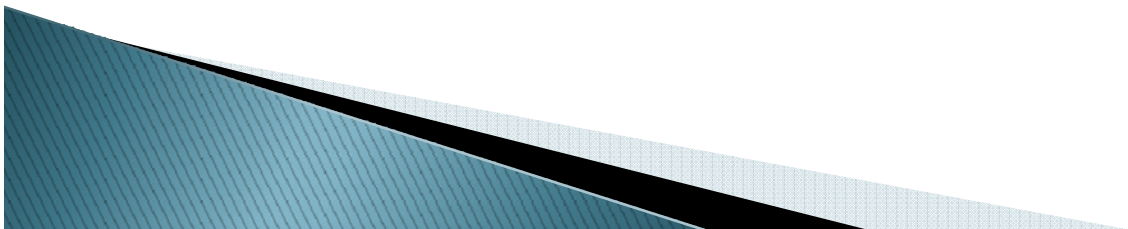
Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)

- Felix does not resent; he is too powerfully moved, but he puts off
- Felix was afraid
- He sent Paul away; he indicated he would call for him at a more "convenient time"
- Notice that his wife Drusilla is not mentioned in these verses
- It probably means she was not interested in the Gospel message to begin with



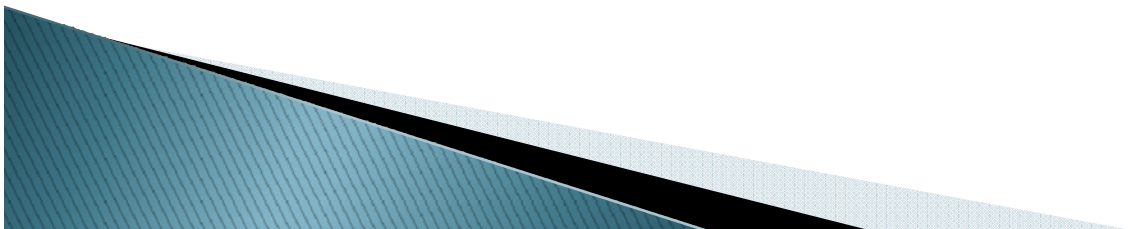
Felix Procrastinates (24:22-27)

- Felix hoped for a bribe from St. Paul to release him
- Felix sent for him often
- St. Paul never discussed his own freedom, but simply used the opportunity to teach Felix about the Gospel message
- After two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix as governor
- Felix wanted to do the Jews a favor, so he "left Paul bound"
- Felix was recalled, because grave accusations were made against him



Conclusion

- Who was Tertullus and what role did he play?
- Please compare the way he addressed Felix to the way St. Paul addressed him
- Was Felix "most noble"?
- What are the charges against St. Paul?
- What was St. Paul response to these accusations?



Conclusion

- Who are missing among Paul's accusers?
- Why wouldn't Felix want to render a verdict?
- What did Paul reason about before Felix and Drusilla
- How did hearing the Gospel affect Felix?
- Why had Felix kept Paul in jail without deciding his case?

